



NEWS RELEASE



**Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center
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Job Corps graduate works hard, finds match in rewarding federal career

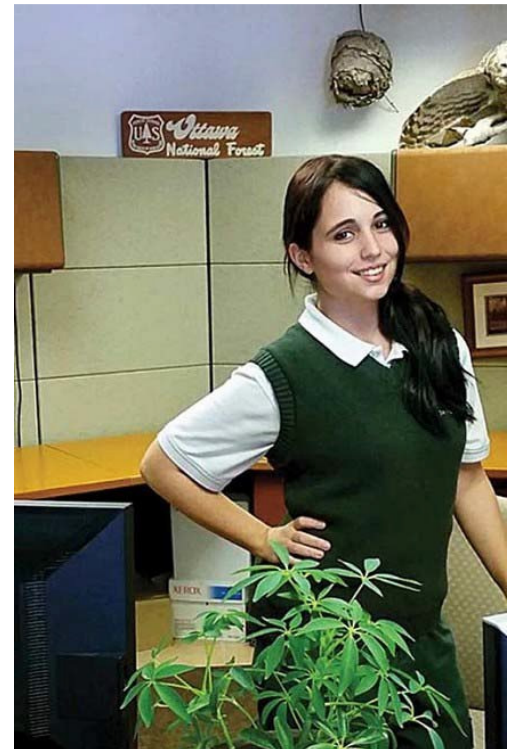
New Leader Program - Public Affairs, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service is calling attention this month to its "next generation" of federal workers: the millennials, those born between 1980 and 2000. The Forest Service works with Job Corps to recruit millennials and inspire them to consider careers in conservation and natural and cultural resource management. The Forest Service and the Blackwell Job Corps Center have a millennial "success story" to tell.

In 2010 Arielle Gonzalez, then 19, took a bold step and left her hometown in Minnesota to enroll in Blackwell's construction program. After an injury caused her to switch career paths, she ultimately graduated with a focus on business administration. Gonzalez said she doesn't have any regrets about signing up for Blackwell or switching programs. "I told myself before I got there, I'm not leaving without a job," she explained.

The determination shown by this millennial began with an ultimatum from her mother upon her graduation from high school in Minnesota: get a job or go to college. "I didn't have cash for college and I wasn't interested in the starter jobs I saw where I lived," Gonzalez said. "I was going nowhere fast. I was the person in high school that everyone thought would be homeless."

A friend's mother told the new graduate about Job Corps opportunities and Gonzalez became determined to create change in her life. "I was nervous about moving away from home but the Job Corps offered a nine-month program and I



Arielle Gonzalez, now employed at the Ottawa National Forest headquarters, is a Blackwell Job Corps success story.

thought I should probably go," she recalled. Gonzalez said her Job Corps education wasn't easy and she saw many students show up for the wrong reasons and not complete their programs. "You've got to be serious and go into the program with goals. The teachers train you as if they were your boss," she said. "I felt confident coming out of the business administration program."

Gonzalez applied for a position on the Ottawa National Forest in 2012. She currently serves the public in the forest headquarters as an office automation clerk. Her current supervisor, Lisa Klaus, recalls interviewing her for the front desk position and being impressed from day one. "Arielle came to her interview with a positive attitude and a determination to succeed that is still present today," she said. Four years later, the Ottawa National Forest knows they made the right choice in hiring Arielle, she added. "It's been such a success for both Arielle and the forest,"

Klaus said. "I enjoy watching her grow in her responsibilities and learn new things. I can't imagine walking into our office and not seeing Arielle's smiling face each day." "I'm so thankful for Job Corps and I feel like I need to give back; that's how much it changed my life. I tell everybody about Job Corps," Gonzales said. "I'm a total supporter. Even my parents didn't see my success coming. They've never been more proud."

"The Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center is associated with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation serves 160 students. The USDA Forest Service operates 28 Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers across 18 states with a capacity of 6,200 students. For more information, visit: <http://recruiting.jobcorps.gov/en/home.aspx>.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to State and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world."

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